

As ~~outer layer.~~

Please cancel claims 26-45. ✓✓

#### REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4-7, 9-12, 14, 24 and 25 remain in the application, the remaining claims being cancelled in order to simplify the issues.

Claim 1 has been extensively revised in order to make clear that a trim piece per se is being claimed.

Some of the other claims have been amended to improve the language.

Claim 1 has been further amended to recite a cyclically varying depth scoring, this being directed to the scoring configuration of Figure 18.

The Examiner has relied on U.S. patent 5,582,424 to Okuyama et al. in rejecting all of the originally presented claims. However, as pointed out in a telephone conversation with the Examiner, Okuyama et al. has a filing date of January 19, 1995. The present application has an effective filing date of October 31, 1994, and hence Okuyama et al. is not prior art to this application. Withdrawal of the rejections of the claims under 35 USC 102(b) or 103(a) is thus respectfully requested.

The remaining references have been reviewed and are not believed to disclose nor suggest the claimed trim piece.

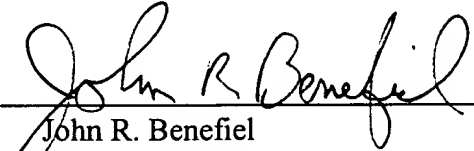
Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "Version with markings to show changes made".

Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: February 14, 2002

By:

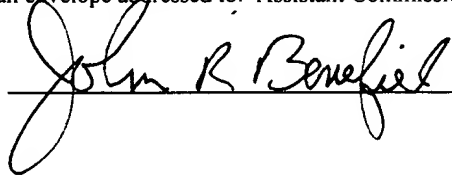
  
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**CERTIFICATE OF MAILING UNDER 37 C.F.R. 1.8(a)**

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By:



IN THE CLAIMS:

Please rewrite claim 1 as follows:

1. (AMENDED) [A preweakened] An automotive interior trim piece [for covering] adapted to cover an air bag installation when said trim piece is installed in an automotive vehicle, said [preweakening applied in] trim piece preweakened along a predetermined pattern [enabling] so as to enable formation of an air bag deployment opening in said trim piece by pressure exerted by [a deploying] an air bag [mounted on the inside] deploying from an inner side of said trim piece [at a particular location], said trim piece [comprised of one or more layers and] having an inner surface and an outer surface, said outer surface visible [from within said] when said trim piece is installed in an automotive vehicle, [and] said outer surface extending smoothly and uninterruptedly across said preweakening pattern [at said particular location], said preweakening comprising a scoring [of] penetrating into said inner surface and extending along said predetermined pattern, said scoring having a stepped depth configuration along said predetermined pattern [adjacent to said outer surface of said trim piece, along said predetermined pattern, without] but not completely penetrating through to said outer surface; said stepped depth configuration cyclically varying in depth.

Please cancel claim 3.

Please rewrite claim 4 as follows:

4. (AMENDED) The trim piece according to claim 2 wherein said

[preweakening] scoring extends completely through said substrate.

Please cancel claims 5 and 8.

Please amend claims 9-12 as follows:

9. (AMENDED) The trim piece according to claim 6 wherein said [preweakening] scoring extends completely through said substrate.

10. (AMENDED) The trim piece according to claim 6 wherein said [preweakening] scoring extends partially into said inner covering layer.

11. (AMENDED) The trim piece according to claim 6 wherein said [preweakening] scoring extends completely through said inner covering layer.

12. (AMENDED) The trim piece according to claim 6 wherein said [preweakening] extends partially into said outer covering layer without completely penetrating through to said outer [layer] surface.

Please cancel claim 13.

Please amend claim 14 as follows:

14. (AMENDED) The trim piece according to claim 13 wherein said trim piece includes a substrate layer with one or more covering layers, and wherein said

[preweakening] scoring includes a continuous scoring completely penetrating said substrate layer and extending along said predetermined pattern.

Please cancel claims 15-23.

Please amend claims 24 and 25 as follows:

24. (AMENDED) A preweakened automotive interior trim piece for covering an air bag installation for an automotive vehicle, said preweakening extending in a predetermined pattern enabling formation of an air bag deployment opening in said trim piece by pressure exerted by deployment of said air bag mounted on the inside of said trim piece at a particular location, said trim piece having a plurality of layers including an outer layer and an inner layer, said outer layer having an outer visible surface extending smoothly and uninterruptedly across said preweakening at said particular location, said preweakening comprising a groove extending in said pattern, but without completely penetrating the outer layer of the said trim piece, said groove having a [stepped] cyclically varying depth bottom portion lying along said predetermined pattern.

25. (AMENDED) The trim piece according to claim 24 wherein said [stepped] cyclically varying depth groove portion forms partial perforations in an inside surface of said outer layer.

Please cancel claims 26-45.